

Minutes of the Standards Committee

6th September, 2010, at 1.15 pm
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham

Present: Councillors Andrew, Idrees, Jackson and Whitehouse;
Mr Denny and Mr Topliss.

Apology: Councillor Clinton.

10/10 **Election of Chair**

Resolved that Mr Topliss be appointed Chair for the ensuing municipal year.

11/10 **Election of Vice-Chair**

Resolved that Mr Denny be appointed Vice-Chair for the ensuing municipal year.

12/10 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 17th May, 2010, be approved as a correct record.

13/10 **Appointment of Standards Sub-Committees**

The Committee was reminded that the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 required Standards Committees to establish sub-committees to discharge functions relating to assessment and review of complaints about member conduct, consideration of reports from the Monitoring Officer on the investigation of complaints, and hearings into complaints. This Committee had on 21st August, 2009, established sub-committees to deal with these functions.

The Authority at its meeting on 28th June, 2010, agreed revised

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membership of the Standards Committees for the 2010/11 municipal year and appointments to the Standards Sub-Committees now had to be reviewed.

Resolved that Assessment, Review, and Consideration and Hearing Sub-Committees for 2010/11 be re-established with the same terms of reference for 2009/10 and that members be appointed to those Sub-Committees as set out in Appendix 1.

14/10 Decentralism and Localism Bill

The Committee noted the Decentralism and Localism Bill and considered its implications, immediate and future for the Authority. In particular, the Bill contained proposals to abolish the Standards Board regime. It was not yet known how this would affect Standards Committees, the Members Code of Conduct, or ethical governance generally.

15/10 Committee on Standards in Public Life- Annual Review and Report 2009-10

The Committee received a summary of the Annual Review and Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) for 2009/10. The CSPL monitored, reported and made recommendations on issues relating to standards in public life. It looked at national and local issues regarding the standards of conduct of all holders of public office ensuring the highest standards of propriety.

The CSPL as part of its deliberations had looked at the Local Government Standards Framework and believed that it was necessary to have a clear code of conduct to deal with serious breaches and some overarching mechanism to ensure effectiveness and consistency.

16/10 Case Summaries

The Committee noted two recently decided cases which illustrated several aspects of the Code of Conduct for Members and contained useful analysis of the type of behaviour which determined whether there had been a breach of the Code. One related to disclosure of interests and the other to disrespect and bullying.

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(Meeting ended at 1.45 pm)

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